

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## US History

### John O'Sullivan on Manifest Destiny, 1839

*John O'Sullivan coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny" when arguing for the annexation (adding territory) of Texas in 1845. This was an article he wrote which explains why he believed that it was America's **manifest destiny** to spread over the continent, delivering their culture, form of government, and religion.*

America is destined for better deeds. It is our unparalleled glory that we have no reminiscences of battlefields, but in defense of humanity, of the oppressed of all nations, of the rights of conscience, the rights of personal enfranchisement. Our annals describe no scenes of horrid carnage, where men were led on by hundreds of thousands to slay one another, dupes and victims to emperors, kings, nobles, demons in the human form called heroes. We have had patriots to defend our homes, our liberties, but no aspirants to crowns or thrones; nor have the American people ever suffered themselves to be led on by wicked ambition to depopulate the land, to spread desolation far and wide, that a human being might be placed on a seat of supremacy.

The expansive future is our arena, and for our history. We are entering on its un-trodden space, with the truths of God in our minds, beneficent objects in our hearts, and with a clear conscience unsullied by the past. We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march?

Yes, we are the nation of progress, of individual freedom, of universal enfranchisement. We must onward to the fulfillment of our mission -- to the entire development of the principle of our organization -- freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality.

This is our high destiny, and in nature's eternal, inevitable decree of cause and effect we must accomplish it. All this will be our future history, to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man -- the immutable truth and beneficence of God. For this blessed mission to the nations of the world, which are shut out from the life-giving light of truth, has America been chosen. Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be *the great nation* of futurity?

- 1) *What is O'Sullivan's argument about America's past and its future? Quote one example from each of the three paragraphs.*
- 2) *Predict: what will be some of the consequences of this document on governments and leaders in America?*